

What is claimed is:

1. A method of return-to-owner security lockout for a portable electronic device comprising:

displaying return-to-owner information on an interface of the device when a
5 security lockout disables the device.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of displaying comprises:
comparing a security lockout bypass input to a security bypass template in the
electronic device; and

disabling the electronic device when the security bypass input is invalid,
10 wherein the security bypass input is invalid when it does not correspond to the
security bypass template.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the security lockout disables the device if
no security lockout bypass input is received when expected or when the security
lockout bypass input is received but does not correspond to a security bypass template
15 stored in the electronic device.

4. The method of Claim 2, wherein the security bypass input is compared
during a start-up process of the electronic device, each time the device is switched to
an ON state.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the disabled electronic device remains in
20 a start-up mode indefinitely until a valid security lockout bypass enables the device.

6. The method of Claim 4, wherein the start-up process is terminated and the
electronic device is disabled by switching to an OFF state if a valid security lockout
bypass input is not received after a period of time, wherein the valid security bypass
input corresponds to the security template.

7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
enabling the electronic device when a valid security lockout bypass is received.

8. The method of Claim 7, further comprising requesting a security lockout
bypass periodically while the electronic device is enabled.

5 9. The method of Claim 2, further comprising:
requesting a security lockout bypass, wherein the security lockout bypass is
optionally requested each time the device is switched to an ON state and is requested
periodically after a valid security lockout bypass enables the electronic device.

10 10. The method of Claim 2, wherein the security lockout bypass comprises
one or more of a password, a personal identification number (PIN), a fingerprint, a
retinal scan, a coded radio frequency or infrared signal, a key, and a key card, the
security lockout bypass being unique to an owner or an authorized user of the device.

15 11. The method of Claim 2, further comprising repeating the step of
comparing one or more times when the security bypass input is determined to be
invalid.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the electronic device is disabled and the
return-to-owner information is displayed each time that the security bypass input is
invalid.

20 13. The method of Claim 1, wherein when the electronic device is disabled, a
shutdown process switches the electronic device to an OFF state and the return-to-
owner information is displayed one or both of during the shutdown process until the
electronic device is OFF and until a security lockout bypass enables the electronic
device.

25 14. The method of Claim 13, the return-to-owner information is displayed one
of continuously, periodically, and each time that a sensor in the electronic device
detects a perturbation of the electronic device.

15. A method of return-to-owner security lockout for a portable electronic device comprising:

receiving a lockout bypass input from a user; and

comparing the bypass input to a bypass template for the electronic device to

5 determine whether the bypass input is valid,

wherein either when an invalid bypass input is received or when the bypass input is expected but not received, the electronic device is disabled and return-to-owner information is displayed using an interface of the disabled device, and

10 wherein when a valid bypass input is received, the electronic device is enabled for use by the user.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the bypass input is received and compared one or both of during a start-up process of the electronic device each time the device is switched to an ON state and periodically during device operation when the valid bypass input enabled the device.

15 17. The method of Claim 15, further comprising repeating the steps of receiving and comparing one or more times when the bypass input is determined to be one of invalid and not received when expected.

18. The method of Claim 15, wherein when the electronic device is disabled, a shutdown process switches the electronic device to an OFF state after which the
20 return-to-owner information is displayed momentarily each time a sensor in the electronic device detects a perturbation of the electronic device.

19. The method of Claim 15, wherein the return-to-owner information comprises one or more of a name for an owner, an address for the owner, a telephone number for the owner, return-to-owner instructions, a device serial number, a name
25 for a lost and found service, an address for the lost and found service, a telephone number for the lost and found service, lost and found service return instructions, return to manufacturer instructions, return to law enforcement office instructions, and an informational message.